



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – John M. Colmers, Secretary

Trans Fat Facts

What is trans fat?

Trans fat is a specific type of fat. It is found naturally in animal products such as meat and butter. It is also formed through a chemical process when hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oil to make the oil more solid. The process is called hydrogenation. Hydrogenation of fats makes food stay fresh longer and also changes its texture. Once hydrogenated, oils lose both their unsaturated character and the related health benefits. Trans fats perform in a manner that is similar to saturated fats in the body, increasing the risk for heart disease.

How does trans fat effect health?

Scientific evidence shows that the consumption of trans fat raises the low-density (LDL) cholesterol level, increasing risk for coronary heart disease (CHD). Saturated fat is the main dietary cause of high blood cholesterol. Heart disease is the #1 cause of death of Marylanders.

Which foods contain trans fat?

The major food sources of trans fat for American adults are:

Food:	Trans Fat Source
Commercial Baked Goods (Bread, Cookies, Cakes, Pies, etc.)	40%
Animal Products (Butter, Meat, etc.)	21%
Margarine, Spreads, Shortenings	21%
Fried Potatoes	8%
Chips, Popcorn	5%
Others	5%

From the above list careful selection of baked goods and the use of trans fat free frying oils offers the easiest route to controlling trans fat intake.

How are products made with artificial trans fat labeled?

Products with “partially hydrogenated” oil listed in the ingredient list will contain trans fat.

Is there a specific quantity of trans fat in food items considered to be harmful to a person's health?

Yes. The American Heart Association's trans fat recommendation is no more trans fat than one percent of total caloric intake. The safest recommended intake remains at zero. In spite of the significant health risks, consumers are now eating more fats containing trans fatty acids, amounting to about 3% of total daily calories. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming 20-30% of total calories from fat with less than 10% of the calories coming from saturated fat.

Can food items be prepared without trans fat?

Yes. For frying and other purposes requiring a liquid vegetable oil trans fat free vegetable oils are now readily available. For other cooking purposes that require the use of a margarine or shortening, as for example in baking cakes and cookies, trans fat free margarines and shortenings are available but the supply is limited at present but expanding to meet demand.

Are the trans fat free alternatives more expensive?

For frying purposes the trans fat free alternatives have a slightly higher cost than trans fat containing oils. Trans fat free shortenings and margarines for baking purposes may be more expensive as they become available due to processing changes.

What are some examples of trans fat free oil and shortening manufacturers?

Asoyia
Canbra
Cargill
Liptons
Loders Croklaan
Nexcel
Pyco
Riceland
Sams
Sysco

Will the cost of food items in restaurants increase?

Restaurant prices should not increase as the contribution of the fat cost to the final price is quite low.

Will trans fat free foods taste as good?

There will be no significant change in the taste of the food. For frying operations, cooking oil typically has a bland taste whether it contains trans fat or not. With margarines and shortenings the absence of trans fat should not influence the product flavor.